

Tips and guidance for using Carers Connect

Thank you for visiting Carers UK's online forum, now known as **Carers Connect**.

Carers Connect is now hosted on Discourse which will feel quite new to many of our members who used our old forum. During the past year we experienced many technical issues on the old forum which resulted in many carers not being able to access the support they were looking for. Discourse forums are used by many organisations around the world and so should be much more reliable. Below are some tips to help you get started and find your way around.

Discourse New User Guide

We would recommend that you have a look through the following user guide which describes the main features of all Discourse forums. [Discourse New User Guide - users - Docs - Discourse Meta](#)

This guide is available on Discourse Meta which also contains lots of other tips and guidance on getting the most out of the forum. Visit [Discourse Meta - The Official Support Forum for Discourse](#) to explore the other support available.

Categories

Carers Connect is divided into the following categories:

- New to the forum
- All about caring
- Benefits, finances and funding
- Carers' health and wellbeing
- Social area
- Specific disabilities and conditions
- Carers UK news and campaigns
- Site feedback

Some of these categories also have sub-categories (e.g. Former carers, Condolences)

Making your first post

If you are new to Carers Connect it would be helpful if you could introduce yourself and say a little about your caring experience. To do this:

- Click on the 'New to the forum' category
- Click on '+ New Topic'
- Type a title such as 'I'm new here'
- Type your message
- Click on the blue '+ Create Topic' button

Tagging a topic

Tags are key words that will help other Carers UK members to find the topic you create. For example, you could add the tags 'dementia' or 'carers-allowance' to your topic if your message refers to these terms.

To add one or more tags to your topic:

- When creating a new topic in a category that allows tags, click on 'select at least one tag...' and choose one or more of the terms from the drop-down menu. If there isn't one that fits, use 'other'
- Currently tags are possible in the 'Benefits, finances and funding' and 'Specific disabilities and conditions' categories

Please note that only Carers UK staff and Volunteer Moderators are able to create new tags, but we will monitor use of the 'other' tag and create new ones, or you can suggest them in the 'Site feedback' category

Posting within a topic

- Click on the topic you wish to respond to
- Below any of the posts in the topic, click on 'Reply'
- Type your message and click on the blue 'Reply' button

Understanding the information provided in each topic

At the bottom of the first post in each topic the following information can be seen:

- *created* – when the topic was created
- *last replied* – when someone last replied within the topic
- *replies* – the total number of replies within the topic
- *views* – the total number of people who have viewed the topic
- *users* – the number of people who have replied within the topic (a small number indicates the number of times each person has replied)
- You will then see a number of different coloured circles with the initial(s) of the members who have posted in the topic

Liking a post

You can click on the heart symbol below each post to indicate that you empathise with, support or like the post, just as you might do on your social media applications.

Sending a link to a post

If you would like to share a link to a post:

- Click on the chain link symbol below the post you wish to share
- Choose whether to share the post on Twitter, Facebook or by email

Changing the font size

- Click on the coloured circle with your initial on it in the top right of your screen
- Click on 'Preferences' (an icon of a person's head and shoulders)
- Click on 'Preferences'
- Click on 'Interface'
- Under Text Size, select your preferred font size from the following:
 - Smallest
 - Smaller
 - Normal
 - Larger
 - Largest

Sending and replying to private messages

- Click on the coloured circle with your initial on it in the top right of your screen
- Click on the envelope icon
- You may see a list of messages that have been sent to you and you can click on any of these to read it and reply
- Alternatively you can click on the down arrow in the pop-up box which will take you to your messages inbox
- Click on the blue 'New Message' button to send a new message
- Alternatively, click on any of the messages in your inbox and click 'Reply'

How to post a photo

- When creating a topic or replying to a post, click on the small icon of a landscape in the menu bar above where you type your message (when you hover your cursor over this icon it will say 'Upload')
- Select an image from your folders to include in your post
- Click the 'Open' button within the pop-up box to attach the photo

How to add an avatar / profile picture

- Click on the coloured circle with your initial on it in the top right of your screen
- Click on 'Preferences' (an icon of a person's head and shoulders)
- Click on Preferences'
- Under 'Profile Picture' click on the small pencil icon beside the coloured circle with your initial on it
- Click on 'Add a custom picture' and then click on 'Upload' to select an avatar / profile picture **(we recommend that you don't use an actual photo of yourself)**

How to change your username

- Click on the coloured circle with your initial on it in the top right of your screen
- Click on 'Preferences' (an icon of a person's head and shoulders)
- Click on Preferences'
- Under 'Username' click on the small pencil icon beside your current username
- Type your new username and then click the blue 'change' button **(please don't use your full name – you could use your first name and a number or a made-up name)**

How to change your password

- Click on your profile picture, then press Preferences.
- Select Account, then 'Send password reset email'